DEMOCRATIC
# GERMAN REPORT

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# 45-HOUR WEEK STARTS JANUARY 1st

Engineering factories in the German Democratic Republic will begin to switch to a 45-hour week on January 1st 1957. This will be the first step to the general introduction of the 45-hour week, replacing the 48-hour week hitherto generally worked in East German industry.

The first trial of the new shortened working week will be made in eight large engineering works during January. The results of the test will be utilised in introducing the general change-over, which is scheduled to begin in February.

The test period is necessary to find how the change-over can best be put into effect without dislocating industry. Two of the main problems to be faced are:

1. Possible overloading of the electricity grid, and
2. Reorganisation of train and bus schedules so that workers can get to and from their plant at the new shift times.

The problem of the extra load on the electricity grid is of particular importance, since the great increase in industrial production in recent years has meant that the grid is already overloaded. This will probably make it impossible to introduce the five-day week, which has been proposed in some quarters, since this would concentrate power consumption on the five working days. Present generator capacity could not cope with the increased demand, it is estimated.

The problem of adjusting train and bus timetables is particularly important in many industrial areas of Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, where workers travel considerable distances to their factories from as many as forty different villages in the surrounding countryside.

(The reduction of the industrial working week to 45 hours during 1957 is the first stage of a government plan for a further big reduction. Under this plan, full details of which are still being worked out, the working week in industry generally will be cut to 42 hours by 1960, and to 40 hours in certain branches of industry. The cut will not entail any reduction in wages. First announcing the plan in March 1956, Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht stated: "By introducing the seven-hour day in the German Democratic Republic we hope not only to improve the standards of the workers in the Republic, but also to help the trade unions in West Germany in their fight for a cut in the very long hours worked there.")

# GOOD RELATIONS WITH POLAND HELP FOR HUNGARY

The Government of the German Democratic Republic favours continued close cooperation with Poland, Prime Minister Grotewohl stated on December 6th. The existing close relations both on a governmental level, and between the peoples of the two states should be further extended, Prime Minister Grotewohl stated at a cabinet meeting. Trade relations should be extended on the basis of the economic structure of both countries, he stated.

Referring to attempts being made by West German circles to drive a wedge between the two states, Prime Minister Grotewohl repeated with great emphasis former declarations that the German Democratic Republic stood firmly for the inviolability of the Oder-Neisse frontier between Germany and Poland.

The Prime Minister announced that in addition to the free grant of goods valued at about ten million dollars already given to the Hungarian Workers' and Peasants' Government, a special credit would be given to Hungary in the first quarter of 1957. To date public contributions in goods and money in the German Democratic Republic for aid to Hungary had amounted to over four million dollars, he announced.

Closer relations between the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia were discussed at a meeting in Prague on December 9th and 10th between leaders of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Czechoslovak Communist Party. It was officially announced that the discussions had shown a complete agreement in viewpoint between the two parties.

On December 11th a delegation of members of the Political Bureau of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany conferred in Warsaw with leaders of the Polish United Workers' Party. A communique issued after the meeting stated that the talks showed basic agreement on all subjects discussed.

**BRITISH LABOUR AND THE GERMAN PROBLEM**

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# THE LABOUR PARTY & GERMAN PROBLEM

## THE LONDON "TRIBUNE" SUGGESTS...

On December 7th 1956 the British left-wing Labour organ "Tribune" printed an article by Basil Davidson entitled "Labour must act on Germany now!". This article, which must be of great interest to all those interested in the German problem, is reprinted in full below. On the next page readers will find some comments made by the editorial staff of GERMAN REPORT. It should be emphasised that these comments represent editorial opinion only, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the German Democratic Republic.

The Labour Party may soon be in power. It may soon be in power, moreover, in circumstances and with leaders capable of generating and using, at last, energies and confidence and will for radical constructive change such as drove our movement in 1945.

An epoch ends. The dreary years of "bi-partisanship" dither to a close. All the petty miseries of Labour foreign policy from Bevin to Morrison pile like refuse behind the locked doors of Eden's nerveless incapacity. At least there is this to be said for that monumental rubbish heap: it clears the way for a fresh start, a fresh advance.

In what direction: by what means?

Everyone knows by this time that the way to an enduring peace in Europe — and thus to major disarmament, and thus to Britain's survival as a powerful country with a relatively high standard of life — lies and must lie through a solution of the German problem.

What is this German problem? Simply, it is to reunite the sundered parts of Germany (the Western "Federal Republic" with 48 million people, and the Eastern "Democratic Republic" with 18 millions) by means acceptable and reassuring to Western Europe, to Eastern Europe, and to most Germans themselves.

In the present European deadlock, how can this be done?

A strong and self-confident Labour Government — and perhaps no other government anywhere — could break the deadlock. On one condition: on not repeating past blunders.

Britain has done its level best since 1947 or 1948 to disunite Germany and keep her disunited against her will.

Many fine things were said by Ernest Bevin about Germany's need for a New Deal: what he actually did in Germany, and allowed to be done, and what others went on doing after him, made a chapter of disaster. The "Bevin period" in Germany will be remembered as a long retreat from the high objectives of the war.

We said we should dismantle private empires in industry and finance: the powers of Krupp and Thyssen and their kind that had done so much for Hitler and Hitler's war.

"These industries," said Bevin in October 1946, "were previously in the hands of magnates who were closely allied to the German military machine, who financed Hitler, and who in two wars were part and parcel of Germany's aggressive policy. We have no desire to see these gentlemen or their like return to a position which they have abused with such tragic results... Our intention is that these industries shall be owned and controlled in future by the public..."

Alas for good intentions! As late as August 1948, the parliamentary assembly of the Ruhr land of North Rhine Westphalia could still pass a law to socialise its coal mines; and could still see it vetoed by British Military Government. Now the bosses are back in strength: the old combines are even stronger than before.

We said we should destroy Nazism root and branch. We declared with our principal allies that we should take "measures necessary to assure that Germany will never again threaten her neighbours or the peace of the world". Yet a Labour Government reopened the door to German rearmament. Now S.S. men are being recruited; Hitler's generals are once more Germany's generals.

We said that Germany's future should rest with democrats. Yet the Labour Party has consistently cold-shouldered the largest working-class party in Germany, the Social Democrats; and until not so many months ago preferred cosy cold-war chats with that staunch defender of colonialism, Guy Mollet.

For this, true enough, right-wing leaders of the German Social Democrats were also to blame: they generally preferred British Conservatives — with a small as well as a large "c" — to British radicals.

These sad and sorry things lie in the past. We ought to recognise them: we need not dwell on them. Now there are new opportunities.

Mollet and his friends have shown us how little their socialism is worth. On their side, too, the German Social Democrats are changing just as the British Labour Party has been changing: they look now for a lead from British Labour, and with an urgency they have not felt before.

In speech after speech their leaders emphasise that German reunification is now an urgent and necessary prelude to European peace. Mellies, their foreign affairs expert, said this again only ten days ago.

What lies behind German Social Democratic pronouncements over the past few months?

1. A recognition that the policy of rearming Western Germany within NATO makes reunification impossible;
2. A desire, therefore, to remove Western Germany from NATO (thus making it possible to remove Eastern Germany from the Warsaw Pact); and to establish Great Power agreement to a reunited Germany's being EXCLUDED FROM ALL ALLIANCES — except for an all-European security pact within the United Nations;
3. An understanding that certain basic social advances in the "Demo-

cratic Republic" — land reform, nationalisation of heavy industry, democratisation of education and its great expansion, especially at university level — should not be lost through reunification;

4. But — and this is important — an absolute refusal to open direct negotiations with any group or party in the "Democratic Republic". (In this the Social Democrats have differed from the right-wing Free Democrats; the latter lately held a conference with like-minded people in East Germany, and considered what they could do about reunification). We should understand the main reason for this refusal: the Social Democratic Party has been suppressed in the "Democratic Republic".

Given these positions, and Labour's results at Blackpool, the Labour Party is now uniquely placed to initiate the peaceful reunification of Germany; and so give the whole of Europe, at last, a real chance of enduring peace.

There is plenty of reason to believe that the Social Democrats would welcome a Labour lead. They could follow this without being accused of "selling the pass to the Communists in East Germany."

There is plenty of reason to believe, though for other reasons, that the Communist who run Eastern Germany would listen to us. They would do this because Moscow is keenly interested in any proposals likely to evolve an all-European security pact.

Practically, what should be done?

An immediate aim should be to arm the Labour Party with new and detailed knowlegde of the German situation — in East and West — and so enable our leaders to take power with a confident policy for breaking the deadlock. Now this policy can only be, in the circumstances, a policy of mediation: of mediation between Western Germany and Eastern Germany.

This means the early constitution of a strong and authoritative Labour commission of investigation into the situation in both parts of Germany, and the means of German reunification.

This commission should:

1. consult with Social Democrats, trade unions and other responsible organisations in the "Federal Republic";

2. examine the situation in the "Democratic Republic", and consult with the Socialist Unity Party (Communists) and anyone else it thought useful and responsible;

3. consider the various sets of "reunification proposals" likely to emerge from these consultations; and then — within the framework of Labour's general policy for peace and the international situation at the time — set about the task of mediating between the two sides.

This policy will need courage. But we have had far too much of the other thing. Discreet, informal, balanced but determined approaches along these lines could give the British Labour Party unique power for good at this time. They could score big gains. Gains for a tortured Europe. Gains for a Britain sorely made to run, just now, the gauntlet of costly and cowardly futility.

# . . . AND "GERMAN REPORT" COMMENTS

The "Tribune" article reproduced in full above gives an excellent summary of the present programme of the more progressive elements of the West German Social Democratic Party, but it begs several very important questions.

As GERMAN REPORT sees it, the central question is this: will the Social Democratic Party in West Germany, if elected to office at the next election, have the will and the power to ensure that the industrial barons and the militarists, who have always run things in the past, do not do so in the future?

A formal withdrawal of West Germany from NATO, envisaged by Mr Davidson in his article, would do little or nothing to ease the situation if the new West German Wehrmacht continue to be commanded by Hitler's old generals, and if the Krupps and the Thyssens continue to hold industrial power.

We do not intend to cast aspersions on the good intentions of large sections of the Social Democratic Party in West Germany: but the whole history of Germany during the 1919—1933 Weimar Republic is a warning that even a well-intentioned Social Democratic Government cannot guarantee a democratic and peaceful Germany if it does not strike at the roots of German militarism — the Prussian military caste and the Ruhr industrial barons who support it. Mr Davidson defines the programme of the West German Social Democrats: not one of these points concerns itself with the vital question of the ownership and control of heavy industry in West Germany or with the question of controlling the West German Wehrmacht, which Mr Davidson admits is now run by Hitler's generals. Until these problems are radically solved West German withdrawal from NATO could well be an empty formula, signifying nothing.

Another point in Mr. Davidson's summary of the Social Democratic position is worthy of comment. He states that the Social Democrats "absolutely refuse" to negotiate with any group or party in the German Democratic Republic on the grounds that the Social Democratic Party has been "suppressed" here. In fact the Social Democratic Party was not "suppressed" in East Germany: what happened was that in 1946 the overwhelming majority of the Social Democrats in East Germany, having learned from history the frightful results of a split between the two main working class parties, voted for the merger of the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party. As a result of this merger the Socialist Unity Party was formed, and it may be noted that Otto Grotewohl, present Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic, was formerly a leading Social Democrat.

The actual suppression of a party has to be sought elsewhere: that is the banning of the Communist Party in West Germany, accomplished by Chancellor Adenauer a few months ago without any serious protest from the Social Democratic leadership. It is significant that the Government of the German Democratic Republic has not utilised this banning as an excuse for refusing to negotiate with West Germany.

GERMAN REPORT is not competent to comment on the proposals made by Mr Davidson in the last paragraphs of his article that a British Labour Party Commission should mediate between East and West on German reunification: any serious comment on this proposal must be left to the Government of the German Democratic Republic if or when such a commission should be established by the Labour Party.

# WORKERS' COMMITTEES

## The Discussion Begins

**Workers' committees which will have a decisive influence on the management of their factories will be elected in the immediate future in about 20 East German factories.**

**This was the main decision taken at a meeting of over 800 worker delegates in Berlin on December 7th and 8th to discuss the formation of such workers' committees.**

**The committees, which will be elected in various different types of socialist factory, will be used to give a "trial run" to the workers' committee idea, and to test how such committees can best function in practice.**

**In the meantime workers throughout socialist industry are being encouraged to discuss all aspects of the new proposals to enable a law on workers' committees to be drafted as soon as possible.**

**On the following pages GERMAN REPORT presents a summary of the programmatic speech delivered by Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht at the conference in Berlin, and a number of proposals and suggestions made by delegates to the conference.**

At this conference we have the task of discussing the rights of the workers in the factories, and the question of electing bodies which could be called "workers' committees", or some similar name. This conference is intended as an introduction to the discussion which should follow in the factories, which could then form the basis for a bill to be introduced in parliament.

We have to realise that the state power of the workers and peasants is in a state of progressive development. In the past few years both the economic functionaries and the workers have learned very much, and for this reason it is necessary to emphasise still more the leading role of the working class, not only in the elected governmental bodies, but also in the factories.

The representatives of the working class play today the decisive role in the government apparatus, but at the same time many workers have pointed out that in the factories the workers have little say in direction and responsibility.

You all know that in the past few years our party has made great efforts to increase the self-confidence of the working class. We have corrected faults of the cult of the personality. But this is not enough. The most important thing is that the high degree of responsibility of the working class in the German Democratic Republic should be fully effective in the government, in the factories and in the alliance with the peasants.

In our economic system we have developed various forms of workers' cooperation in directing production. I recall the activists' commissions, which were a great help in fighting bureaucracy and improving work organisation. Later there were the economic conferences for whole branches of industry, and in the factories. These are all forms of workers' cooperation in the direction of production.

Experience has proved, however, that a proportion of the good proposals made have not been put into effect, for bureaucratic or for other reasons. The creation of workers' committees, democratically elected, should give greater guarantees that the proposals of the economic conferences or proposals made by the workers will be put into effect, insofar as this is economically possible.

The objection may be made that in the Soviet Union, where socialism has triumphed, there are no workers' committees in the factories. We do not believe that this is a valid objection to our proposal. Why do we believe this? In the Soviet Union the working class and its state power have worked for more than thirty years on the task of building up socialism. There they have developed high forms of directing socialist economy in the period of transition to communism. We have naturally learned much from the highly developed forms and methods used in the Soviet Union, and we shall continue to learn from these models. But we must remember that in the Soviet Union the consciousness of the working class developed in decades of struggle, while we, following the example of the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union, are attempting to solve various important problems by leaps and bounds; in doing this we do not always pay enough attention to the rate of development of the consciousness of the working class.

This is undoubtedly a source of mistakes. We have to take into account that we must not only develop our own specific forms and methods of transition to socialism, but must also pay heed to a number of special factors in the development of the consciousness of the working class.

(Walter Ulbricht then recalled steps which had been taken as far back as 1954 to increase operative self-reliance in the factories, and to counteract over-centralisation.)

The question has been posed as to whether the re-definition of the rights of workers in the factories shall extend only to co-discussion and co-determination. We believe that these rights go further. The representatives of the workers should take part in making the decisions, and they should really join in bearing responsibility. This task can only be mastered if the workers in the factories treat factory affairs as their own concern, and if they have the right to participate in solving the problems.

Under the present system the influence of the workers is subjected to various limitations. The following two main faults have shown themselves:

1. The present form of consultation in the form of production discussions, economic conferences, etc., is too sporadic, and does not ensure continuing cooperation with the workers;

2. There is a disadvantageous limitation of the influence of the workers particularly with regard to an effective control that proposals and decisions are really put into effect.

The creation of permanent workers' committees with a right of decision is designed to overcome these difficulties. By establishing workers' committees we intend to take a decisive new step towards extending democracy, and this new step will be a consistent continuation of the path which we have hitherto taken.

The activities of the workers' committees will help to limit bureaucracy, and will help to establish normal conditions in those factories where there is a gulf between workers and management — and there are such factories.

The workers' committees will force those factory officials who have hitherto directed the factories in the old reactionary way to use the correct methods; that is to say to cooperate with the workers. On the other hand those factory directors who have used the correct methods in the past will be glad of the cooperation of the workers' committees in solving the problems of socialist construction.

We must throw down a challenge to all those who plan to exploit the workers' committees in order to undermine or to damaged the workers' and peasants' state. Such circles hope that reactionary forces, using demagogic slogans, will smuggle themselves into the workers' committees. We know that in the big factories there are people working who served in the fascist government service during the Hitler period. There are for instance former fascist state attorneys, who do quite decent work today. The majority of these people adopt a loyal attitude towards our state: but there are some who have reactionary perspectives, and who hope for the restoration of the old conditions. The working class will have to be vigilant, and see to it that such people are not elected to the workers' committees with the votes of well-meaning workers.

I do not intend today to lay down in detail the tasks of the workers' committees: this is the task of the discussion which lies ahead of us. If we answered all questions in advance, then there would be no discussion.

I should therefore like to limit myself to a few basic questions. We believe that the workers' committee should discuss the factory plan, and see to it that this plan is discussed by the workers. It should occupy itself with the process of production, with rationalisation and the raising of the standard of production, with improvements in organisation, the reduction of costs etc. The workers' committee should cooperate in working out the long-term plan for the factory; it should see to it that proposals made at the production discussions are put into effect; it should have a decisive influence on the distribution of bonuses; it should also deal with important personnel questions. It should have the right to request reports from the factory director on these subjects.

Summing up, the workers' committee should have the right of decision within the framework of factory competence.

The question has been posed whether this does not mean that the tasks of the workers' committee will overlap with the activities of the trade unions. I should like to state my views on this subject.

The trade unions are schools of socialism. The economic basic law of socialism is the raising of the standard of living of the working people by means of increasing production and productivity and developing the most progressive techniques. This means that the trade unions are directly concerned in state activity, the solution of the economic task, and that they are above all responsible for safeguarding the social and cultural interests of the working people.

The trade unions will continue to be responsible for production conferences and emulation contests. The creation of workers' committees will make it even clearer that the trade unions are the class organisations of the workers, and not, as some West German trade unionists claim, state organisations.

The workers' committees will not have the task of taking over the responsibilities of the trade unions. I shall give an example: the workers' committee will concern itself only with important personnel questions, with questions affecting the department manager, the factory manager, the technical manager, the labour manager and so on. It will not concern itself with general questions of hiring and firing: this will remain in the competence of the trade union. The workers' committee will deal with the distribution of bonuses and the main directives for work norms: it will not concern itself with wage questions, which will remain within the competence of the trade unions.

When we define in this way the role of this new organisational form, then we can judge better some of the measures and ideas on workers' councils at present being discussed in Poland and Yugoslavia. Some of the ideas expressed with regard to the aims in these countries differ from our ideas. In Yugoslavia, for instance, there is the idea of factory autonomy, which means in effect that each factory should solve its problems on its own.

It must be obvious that in a highly industrialised country like the German Democratic Republic, with a highly developed division of labour between different factories, the idea of factory autonomy is not worthy of serious consideration. In a modern economy such autonomy must lead to economic confusion, and make the question of raw material supplies and sales incredibly complicated. There would also be difficulties about the size of wages, and in fact whether wages could be paid at all. Such a practice would inevitably lead to the various socialised factories trying to swindle each other.

(Walter Ulbricht then quoted statistics to show that in the past four years there had been considerable price increases in Yugoslavia.)

The creation of workers' committees in the German Democratic Republic will have a great political influence on the struggle of the working class in West Germany. This will place the class enemy in a difficult position.

Today, West German politicians, acting on the instructions of the Ruhr industrialists, are calling for factory autonomy in the People's Democracies, since they hope by this means to undermine the people's democratic order. But very soon the West German workers will turn the tables, and will demand real workers' rights in the big capitalist concerns of West Germany.

In West Germany the time will come when there is no power capable of suppressing the rights of the workers, and when nobody will be


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able to prevent the pattern of our democracy and the rights of our workers' committees having its effect on conditions in West German factories.

One does not have to be particularly clever to prophesy that in the coming months many West German workers' delegations will visit our workers' committees in the factories to learn all about their rights and duties, and to learn how the working class in West Germany can also win such rights.

The workers' committees in the German Democratic Republic will be a further step on the road to Socialist democracy, to the full development of the creative power of the working people.

**DISCUSSION**

**All readers are invited to take part in the discussion on the functions of workers' committees. It would be particularly valuable and interesting to hear from readers who work in the nationalised British coal industry.**

# *DISCUSSION POINTS*

Berta Hennig, of the Boizenburg Wharf, said:

"Workers at the wharf are in favour of workers' committees, especially because they are to be composed of two-thirds production workers and one third office employees and higher technical personnel. Up to the present, suggestions from workers have been largely ignored and many mistakes made could have been avoided if more attention had been paid to them."

* * *

Foreman Erich Rotha of the nationally owned soft coal works in Zeitz, stated:

"There is a certain amount of doubt amongst the workers in our works as to whether the workers' committees will succeed in getting the consent of the management and higher technical personnel to their suggestions. We do not in the least want to give the impression that we are sectarian. On the contrary, our comrades dwell constantly on the need for alliance both with the intelligentsia and with the peasants. But we must be sure of the acceptance of workers' proposals."

* * *

Curt Seiler, assistant Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party in the nationally owned agricultural machines factory in Leipzig, stated:

"In factory meetings and discussions with factory workers we constantly come up against an attitude amongst senior and middle-scale management personnel which does not show sufficient willingness to help or respect workers' efforts. Middle-rank office personnel often try to settle important problems without enlisting the help of the workers."

* * *

Dr. Thamm, instructor in the Dresden Institute of Technology, put forward the following suggestion:

"I think we must be careful to avoid just setting up a new committee with an office and stenotypist, folder for resolutions and so on. The people in the workers' committee must be and must remain production workers — good, experienced workers. And it is a good thing that the Central Committee has said that they must have been at least one year in the works. I should say the time could well be even longer."

* * *

Works director Gerhard Luetzkendorf, city electric supply, Cottbus, stated:

"I cannot entirely agree with Comrade Ulbricht's statement. He says quite rightly that workers' committees in the factories are basic to our work and that no manager need fear democratic organisations. I agree with him entirely in this and welcome any help which workers can give me. But one point in his speech struck me — that at top level the trade unions should share responsibility for planning and technical developments. Since we are separating the spheres of responsibility of trade unions and workers' committees at a factory level, I believe it would be better to create workers' committees in central institutions as well. A good starting-point here would be the present activists' commissions in the central administrative offices. I think factories should have more rights and we should go farther in making recommendations to factories and leaving them to work them out in detail."

* * *

Excavator Rudolf Nitzsche, nationally owned plate works, Meissen, stated:

"As Comrade Ulbricht said, there will probably be some managers and department heads who do not approve of workers' committees. This might apply in our works. We have some department heads who pay no attention to us workers or our proposals. So I hope it will not take too long to get started with our workers' committee. Our committee might also look into capital investment, organisation of work and quality of production."

* * *

Foreman Lieb, of the Bitterfeld electro-chemical combine, stated:

"The majority is in favour of workers' committees. But they rightly say that members of these committees must have good technical knowledge and be politically conscious. For instance, they must be able to read plan figures and comparisons, for these provide the best analysis of work done. If members do not know or are not capable of judging these problems correctly, the same thing will happen as has happened many times before: production workers will go on being influenced by technical and office personnel in the direction these people want."

* * *

Werner Lucas, chairman of the miners' union, stated:

"I have the impression that if we hand over all those tasks to the workers' committees which have been suggested here, the members will have no time left to work in production. After discussion with workers on the subject I can see that there are many important production problems which the workers must help to solve, however . . . There have been discussions amongst trade unionists as to whether some of these tasks should be handed over direct to the trade unions. The trade unions will continue to interest themselves in developing and increasing production, for this alone can increase the workers' material and cultural standard of living. But they will never take over direct control of production in the factories."

# STATISTICIAN CORRECTS FIGURES

*Guenter Praetorius, employee of the District Statistical Office, Magdeburg, German Democratic Republic, has checked up some of the statistics on average earnings, pensions, and Christmas bonuses printed in GERMAN REPORT dated November 23rd. Here are the main points from his letter:*

"Last week I got No. 24 of 'Democratic German Report' and I think it is necessary to point out various mistakes.

"In the article entitled 'E. German Pensions Boost' you say: 'The average monthly wage in the German Democratic Republic is about 380 marks'. I do not know where you got your information, but by reference to the Statistical Yearbook of the German Democratic Republic for 1955 you can see that the average wage of workers (including employees) was 354 marks monthly in 1955. The wage you quote is for workers in nationally-owned enterprises, and for employees of parties, trade unions etc — about 70% of the labour force. The remainder, nearly 30% of the working force, has an average income of less than 300 marks monthly.

(Herr Praetorius then quotes detailed figures from the official statistics showing that workers in nationally-owned enterprises have an average monthly wage of 389 marks; workers in cooperatives (mainly retail shop assistants) have an average monthly wage of 291 marks, workers in private enterprises have an average wage of 261 marks; and employees of parties, trade unions, etc., have an average wage of 412 marks.)

"The difference between 354 marks, the actual average wage, and 380 marks, the average wage which you quoted, is big enough in the course of a year to buy an evercoat of worsted yarn and a pair of box-calf shoes for man or wife.

"Our standard of living has constantly risen since the beginning of the First Five Year Plan (in 1951), but nevertheless there still remains much to be done. All factors affecting the standard of living, and wages are one of the most important factors, must be regarded very critically. Therefore we should not speak of successes not yet achieved.

"I was also doubtful when I read in GERMAN REPORT that there is one pensioner to every two-and-a-half persons gainfully employed. That would mean that there were more than 3,292,700 pensioners in the German Democratic Republic ... The Statistical Yearbook, however, quotes the number of old age and disability pensioners as about 2,521,600.

"Referring to Christmas bonuses, these will not be paid to all workers in nationally-owned industry and in government offices, but only to those employees having a monthly income of less than 500 marks. And not all our workers smoke the cheapest cigarettes costing 8 pfennigs each: the average price of cigarettes is 10 pfennigs. This means that the bonus for an unmarried man is sufficient to buy about 250 cigarettes, not 300 as you stated in GERMAN REPORT.

"Dear Sir, let us speak with full accuracy of all things which are really going on in the German Democratic Republic.

Yours sincerely,
G. Praetorius."

# NEW AID FOR COOP FARMING

Far-reaching steps to help strengthen agricultural production cooperatives in East Germany were announced on December 7th.

The steps were mainly designed to aid those cooperatives which were in a weak economic position because they had taken over abandoned farms, and had had difficulties in getting them into full production again. Credits totalling 180 million marks which had been extended to these cooperatives have now been cancelled, so that they can go ahead free of debt. Credits granted to many other cooperatives will be extended by several years.

Other steps to help the agricultural production cooperatives, the socialist form of agriculture which farms about one fifth of the fields in the German Democratic Republic, included the following:

1. One thousand trained agricultural experts will be made immediately available for work on the cooperatives.

2. 1500 skilled industrial workers will be recruited before the end of 1956 to help in the organisational work of the cooperatives.

3. Cooperatives will in future be able to purchase small tractors. Previously they had to hire all tractors from the central machine and tractor stations. Industry will be encouraged to produce more small agricultural machinery, both for the cooperatives and for individual farms.

In addition to these measures, proposals were made that in future the cooperatives would be encouraged to use their own initiative as to the best use of their fields, instead of being so firmly bound to central directives.

## Hitler's General Staff Back

Thirty-eight former Hitler generals have been reinstalled in their old ranks in the new West German Wehrmacht: 31 of them were formerly members of the General Staff.

These figures were officially announced in the West German Parliament on December 7th. It is common knowledge that the General Staff of the German Army, under Kaiser Wilhelm, the Weimar Republic and under Hitler, was exclusively composed of confirmed militarists, who constituted a super-militarist "state within the state".

The proportion of former General Staff officers is also very high in the lower ranks of the new Wehrmacht, it was officially announced. 100 of the 237 colonels, and 84 of the 225 lieutenant colonels were also members of the Hitlerite General Staff.

## TRADE NOTES

A long-term trade agreement was signed in New Delhi early in December between India and the German Democratic Republic. Main exports from East Germany will be machines, industrial equipment, and chemicals. Imports from India will include iron ore, mica, fine woods, leather and textile goods, vegetable oils, spices, tobacco, tea and coffee.

A trade agreement was signed in December 1956 between Indonesia and the German Democratic Republic which provides for a considerable extension of existing trade between the two countries.

# BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

In several previous numbers of GERMAN REPORT we have dealt with a volume entitled "Banned Books" by the American authoress Anne Lyon Haight. In her book, which was published in America and Britain, Miss Haight made the charge, amongst others, that the works of Heinrich Heine, great German poet, and Sinclair Lewis, great American novelist, were banned in East Germany. I dealt with the charges in some detail in my Berlin Notebook on December 9th 1955, showing that in fact the works of Heine and Sinclair Lewis had been published in editions of hundreds of thousands of copies, and were extremely popular.

We returned to the subject on May 11th 1956, after an article had been published in the British periodical "The Assistant Librarian" in which Mr R. L. Collison, of Westminster Public Libraries, had accepted Miss Haight's allegations at their face value.

I am glad to see from the December 1956 issue of "The Assistant Librarian" that Mr Collison has been making serious efforts to discover the rights and wrongs of the situation.

After quoting at some length our refutation of Miss Haight's "banning" charges, Mr Collison writes:

"In the meantime I had been trying to get in touch with Mrs Haight: I missed her during her brief visit to England in the summer, and it was not until July 22nd that my letters eventually caught up with her in New York, when she wrote me the following reply: — 'I have searched far and wide among my papers for the authority from which I quoted that the works of Heine and Upton Sinclair were banned in East Berlin, and I cannot find it. It was boxed in a trade magazine and at the time the publisher and I discussed the reliability of the statement and decided that it was all right. It seemed plausible considering their past histories. However, that was in 1954, and I am wondering if they were banned then, but not in 1955 and 1956.'

"Since then I have had no further word from Mrs Haight, but I think we can safely assume that she, and John Peet . . . are all sincerely convinced of the rights of their conflicting cases, and that good documentary evidence will be found to support them ... Mrs Haight, in her book, may possibly have given some instances which no longer apply, but her main task was well done: she did not hesitate to call censorship by its true name, whether it occurred in the USA or Germany, Britain or the USSR — a model which we (and Mr Peet) would do well to follow."

I think Mr Collison's very fair article, which shows that he has devoted considerable effort to arrive at the truth, can speak for itself, but I should just like to make a couple of footnotes to the letter from Miss Haight which he quotes. I do not know quite how Upton Sinclair crept into the discussion: I never mentioned him, and can only assume that at some point the names of Upton Sinclair and Sinclair Lewis became confused. I can only assure Miss Haight that the works of Sinclair Lewis and Heinrich Heine were never at any time banned in East Germany since 1945: she has obviously fallen victim to a false statement published in the American trade press. I hope that this episode, which I trust can now be considered as closed, has shown her that news dispatches from Associated Press, United Press, or other sources, can not always be considered as gospel truth.

And if Miss Haight is ever in Berlin I shall be delighted to take her round some of the excellent bookshops and show her many of her "banned books" in free sale. If she still believes that they have just been "unbanned" then we can spend a pleasant afternoon at the offices of several publishers looking at the previous editions of these works, and leafing through the files to see that they were published and reviewed in the normal way in those years in which she thinks they may have been banned.

* * *

On another page of this issue we print a reader's letter correcting some statistical details given in our last number.

After a protracted session with the Statistical Yearbook of the German Democratic Republic I have convinced myself that the reader is right, and I was wrong, and I am grateful for the correction. But during my research in this useful volume, with nearly 300 tightly packed pages of figures, I have stumbled across several other figures which I think may be interesting.

They are figures on the average numbers of pupils per teacher in the schools of the German Democratic Republic. This problem of the ratio of teachers to pupils is something which has a very direct effect upon the efficiency of teaching: I know that teachers in Britain, for instance, are very seriously concerned about the fact that in some districts there are 50 or more pupils in the primary schools for every teacher, though this is, of course, well above the national average.

The London "New Statesman and Nation" quoted some statistics on this problem in its issue of December 8th, and I was glad to have the chance of comparing them with the official statistics of the German Democratic Republic.

According to the "New Statesman", the British national average for primary schools is 31 children per teacher: in East Germany the average is 26.4 children per teacher. Even the district with the poorest ratio, Halle, has one teacher for every 29.6 children, well below the British average, and very considerable lower than the ratio in the poorest British districts.

In British secondary schools the national average is 21.4 pupils per teacher: in East Germany, middle and high schools, roughly equivalent to British secondary standard, the ratio is 17.1 pupils per teacher.

To be quite fair, I should make it clear that this very favourable ratio in the German Democratic Republic is not entirely due to the great effort made by the government to provide an adequate number of teachers: a study of the vital statistics showed me that the birth rate between 1942 and 1949, the most difficult war and post-war years, was considerably lower than the average, so that the number of children of school age is today lower than it would otherwise have been.

On the other hand, the British educational system has never been faced with the frightful problem which faced the East German authorities in 1945: the problem of completely cleansing the educational system of nazi influence. Since the nazis had infiltrated the schools so very successfully this meant in effect getting rid, not only of the old nazi schoolbooks, but of most of the old teachers as well.

This was done radically, and the whole educational system practically had to start from scratch. Enormous efforts had to be made to train new teachers, and today's statistics show how successfully this task has been accomplished.

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